

# THE WEEKLY TRIBUNE.

JOHN B. WILLIAMS & ROBERT H. MILLER,

"Willing to Praise but not Afraid to Blame."

PROPRIETORS.

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE.

(Continued from last week.)

In a note addressed to our Minister in Mexico, maintains that by the Florida treaty of 1819, the territory as far west as the Rio Grande was confirmed to Spain. In that note he states "that by the treaty of the twenty-second February 1819, between the United States and Spain, the Sabine was adopted as the line of boundary between the two powers. Up to that period, no considerable colonization had been effected in Texas; but the territory between the Sabine and the Rio Grande being confirmed to Spain by the treaty, applications were made to that Power for grants of land; and such grants; or permissions of settlements, were in fact made by the Spanish authorities in favor of citizens of the United States proposing to emigrate Texas in numerous families, before the declaration of independence by Mexico."

The Texas which was ceded to Spain by the Florida treaty of 1819, embraced all the country now claimed by the State of Texas between the Nueces and the Rio Grande.—The republic of Texas always claimed this as her western boundary, and in her treaty made with Santa Anna in May, 1836, he recognised it as such. By the constitution which Texas adopted in March, 1836, senatorial and representative districts were organized, extending west of the Nueces. The Congress of Texas, on the nineteenth of December, 1836, passed "An act to define the boundaries of the republic of Texas," in which they declared the Rio Grande from its mouth to its source to be the boundary, and by the said act they extended their "civil and political jurisdiction" over the country up to that boundary. During a period of more than nine years, which intervened between the adoption of her constitution and her annexation as one of the States of our Union, Texas asserted and exercised many acts of sovereignty and jurisdiction over the territory and inhabitants west of the Nueces. She organized and defined the limits of counties extending to the Rio Grande. She established courts of justice and extended her judicial system over the territory. She established a custom-house, and collected duties, and also post offices, and post roads in it. She established a land office, and issued numerous grants for land, within its limits. A Senator and a Representative residing in it were elected to the Congress of the republic, and served as such, before the act of annexation took place. In both the Congress and Convention of Texas, which gave their assent to the terms of annexation to the United States proposed by our Congress, were representatives residing west of the Nueces, who took part in the annexation itself. This was the Texas which by the act of our Congress of the 29th of Dec., 1845, was admitted as one of the States of the Union. That the Congress of the United States understood the State of Texas as which they admitted into the Union to extend beyond the Nueces, is apparent from the fact, that on the 31st of December, 1845, only two days after the act of admission, they passed a law "to establish a collection district in the State of Texas," by which they created a port of delivery at Corpus Christi, situated west of the Nueces, and being the same point at which the Texan custom-house, under the laws of that republic had been located, and directed that a surveyor to collect the revenue, should be appointed for that port by the President, by and with the advice of the Senate. A surveyor was accordingly nominated and confirmed by the Senate, and has been ever since in the performance of his duties. All these acts of the republic of Texas, and our Congress preceded the orders for the advance of our army to the east bank of the Rio Grande. Subsequently Congress passed an act "establishing certain post routes," extending west of the Nueces.

The country west of that river now constitutes a part of one of the Congressional districts of Texas, and is represented in the House of Representatives. The Senators from that State were chosen by a legislature in which the country west of that river was represented. In view of all these facts, it is difficult to conceive upon what ground it can be maintained that, in occupying the country west of the Nueces with our army, with a view solely to its security and de-

fence, we invaded the territory of Mexico. But it would still have been more difficult to justify the Executive whose duty it is to see that the laws be faithfully executed, if in the face of all these proceedings both of the Congress of Texas and of the United States, he had assumed the responsibility of yielding up the territory west of the Nueces to Mexico, or refusing to protect and defend this territory and its inhabitants, including Corpus Christi, as well as the remainder of Texas, against the threatened Mexican invasion.

But Mexico herself has never placed the war which she has waged upon the ground that our army occupied the intermediate territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. Her refusal to preclude that Texas was not in fact an independent State, but a rebellious province, was obstinately persevered in; and her avowed purpose in commencing a war with the United States was to reconquer Texas, and to restore Mexican authority over the whole territory—not to the Nueces only, but to the Sabine. In view of the proclaimed menace of Mexico to this effect, I deemed it my duty, as a measure of precaution and defence, to order our army to occupy a position on our frontier as a military post, from which our troops could best resist and repel any attempted invasion which Mexico might make.

Our army had occupied a position at Corpus Christi, west of the Nueces, as early as August, 1845, without complaint from any quarter. Had the Nueces been regarded as the western boundary of Texas, that boundary had been passed by our army many months before it advanced to the eastern bank of the Rio Grande. In my annual message of December last, I informed Congress that, upon invitation of both the Congress and the Convention of Texas I had deemed it proper to order a strong squadron to the coasts of Mexico, and to concentrate an efficient military force on the western frontier of Texas, to protect and defend the inhabitants against the menace of invasion of Mexico. In that message I informed Congress that the moment the terms of annexation offered by the United States were accepted by Texas, the latter became so far a part of our own country as to make it our duty to afford such protection and defence, and that for that purpose our squadron had been ordered to the Gulf, and our army to "take a position between the Nueces and the Del Norte," or Rio Grande, and "to repel any invasion of Texan territory which might be attempted by the Mexican forces."

It was deemed proper to issue this order, because, soon after, the President of Texas, in April, 1845, had issued his proclamation convening the Congress of that republic, for the purpose of submitting to that body the terms of annexation proposed by the United States, the government of Mexico made serious threats of invading the Texan territory. These threats became more imposing as it became more apparent, in the progress of the question, that the people of Texas would decide in favor of accepting the terms of annexation; and finally, they had assumed such a formidable character, as induced both the Congress and Convention of Texas to request that a military force should be sent by the United States into her territory for the purpose of protecting and defending her against the threatened invasion. It would have been a violation of good faith towards the people of Texas to have refused to afford the aid which they desired against a threatened invasion, to which they had been exposed by their free determination to annex themselves to our Union, in compliance with the overture made to Congress.

Accordingly, a portion of the army was ordered to advance into Texas. Corpus Christi was the position selected by Gen. Taylor. He encamped at that place in August, 1845, and the army remained in that position until the 11th of March, 1846, when it moved westward, and on the 28th of that month reached the east bank of the Rio Grande, opposite Matamoros. This movement was made in pursuance of orders from the War Department, issued on the 13th of January, 1846. Before these orders were issued, the despatch of our minister in Mexico, transmitting the decision of the Council of Government of Mexico, advising that he should not be received, and also the despatch of our consul residing in the city of Mexico—the former bearing date on the 18th of December, 1845; copies of both of which accompanied my message to Congress of the 11th of May last—were received at the Department of State. These communications rendered it highly probable, if not absolutely certain, that our minister would not be received by the Government of General Herrera. It was also well known that but little hope could be entertained of a different result from Gen. Paredes, in case the revolutionary movement which he was prosecuting should prove successful, as our minister, in the despatch referred to, states, breathed the fiercest hostility against the United States, denounced the proposed negotiation as treason, and openly called upon the troops and the people to put down the government of Herrera by force. The conquest of Texas and war with the United States were openly threatened. These were the circumstances existing, when it was deemed proper to order the army under the command of Gen. Taylor to advance on the western frontier of Texas, and occupy a position on or near the Rio Grande.

The apprehensions of a contemplated Mexican invasion have been since fully justified by the event. The determination of Mexico to rush into hostilities with the United States was afterwards manifested from the whole tenor of the note of the Mexican Minister of Foreign Affairs to our Minister, bearing date on the 12th March, 1846. Paredes had then revolutionized the government, and his minister, after referring to the resolution for the annexation of Texas, which had been adopted by Congress in March, 1846, proceeded to declare that a fact such as this, or to speak with greater exactness, so notable an act of usurpation, created an imperative necessity that Mexico, for her own honor, should repel it with proper firmness and dignity. The supreme government had beforehand declared that it would look upon such an act as a *casus belli*; and, as a consequence, of this declaration, negotiation was, by its very nature, at an end, and was the only resource of the Mexican government.

It appears, also, that on the fourth of April fol-

lowing, General Paredes, through his minister of war, issued orders to the Mexican general in command on the Texan frontier to "attack" our army "by every means which war permits." To this General Paredes had been pledged to the army and people of Mexico during the military revolution which had brought him into power. On the 18th of April, 1846, General Paredes addressed a letter to the commander on that frontier, in which he stated to him "at the present date I suppose you at the head of that valiant army, either fighting already, or preparing for the operations of a campaign;" and "supposing you already on the theatre of operations, and with all the forces assembled, it is indispensable that hostilities be commenced, yourself taking the initiative against the enemy."

The movement of our army to the Rio Grande was made by the commanding general under positive orders to abstain from all aggressive acts towards Mexico, or Mexican citizens, and to regard the relations between the two countries as peaceful, unless Mexico should declare war, or commit acts of hostility indicative of a state of war; and these orders he faithfully executed. Whilst occupying his position on the east bank of the Rio Grande, within the limits of Texas, then recently admitted as one of the States of our Union, the commanding general of the Mexican forces, who, in pursuance of the orders of his government, had collected a large army on the opposite shore of the Rio Grande, crossed the river, invaded our territory, and commenced hostilities by attacking our forces.

Thus, after all the injuries which we had received and borne from Mexico, and after she had insultingly rejected a minister sent to her on a mission of peace, and when she had solemnly agreed to receive, she consummated her long course of outrage against our country, by commencing an offensive war, and shedding the blood of our citizens on our own soil.

The United States never attempted to acquire Texas by conquest. On the contrary, at an early period, after the people of Texas had achieved their independence, they sought to be annexed to the United States. At a general election in September, 1836, they decided with great unanimity, in favor of "annexation;" and in November following, the congress of the republic authorized the appointment of a minister to bear their request to this government. This government, however, having remained neutral between Texas and Mexico during the war between them and considering it due to the honor of our country, and our fair fame among the nations of the earth, that we should not, at this early period, consent to annexation, nor until it should be manifest to the whole world that the reconquest of Texas by Mexico was impossible, refused to accede to the overtures made by Texas. On the 12th of April, 1844, and after more than seven years had elapsed since Texas had established her independence, a treaty was concluded for the annexation of that republic to the U. States, which was rejected by the Senate. Finally, on the first of March, 1845, congress passed a joint resolution for annexing her to the U. States, upon certain preliminary conditions, to which her consent was required. The solemnities which characterized the deliberations and conduct of the government and people of Texas, on the deeply interesting questions presented by these resolutions, are known to the world. The Congress, the executive and the people of Texas, in a convention elected for that purpose, accepted with great unanimity the proposed terms of annexation; and thus consummated on her part the great act of restoring to our federal union a vast territory which had been ceded to Spain by the Florida treaty, more than a quarter a century before.

After the joint resolution for the annexation of Texas to the United States had been passed by our Congress, the Mexican minister at Washington addressed a note to the Secretary of State, bearing date on the 6th of March, 1845, protesting against it as "an act of aggression the most unjust which can be found recorded in the annals of modern history, namely that of despoiling a friendly nation, like Mexico, of a considerable portion of her territory;" and protesting against the resolution of annexation, as being an act "whereby the province of Texas, an integral portion of the Mexican territory, is agreed upon and admitted into the American Union;" and he announced that, as a consequence, his mission to the United States had terminated, and demanded his passports, which were granted. It was upon the absurd pretext, made by Mexico, (herself indebted for her independence to a successful revolution) that the republic of Texas still continued to be, notwithstanding all that had passed, a province of Mexico, that this step was taken by the Mexican minister.

Every honorable effort has been used by me to avoid the war which followed, but all have proved vain. All our attempts to preserve peace have been met by insult and resistance on the part of Mexico. My efforts to this end commenced in the note of the Secretary of State of the tenth of March, 1845, in answer to that of the Mexican minister. Whilst declining to re-open a discussion which had already been exhausted, and proving again what was known to the whole world, that Texas had long since achieved her independence, the Secretary of State expressed the regret of this Government that Mexico should have taken offence at the resolution of annexation passed by Congress, and gave assurance that "our most strenuous efforts shall be devoted to the amicable adjustment of every cause of complaint between the two governments, and to the cultivation of the kindest and most friendly relations between the sister republics."

That I have acted in the spirit of this assurance, will appear from the events which have since occurred. Notwithstanding Mexico had abruptly terminated all diplomatic intercourse with the United States, and ought, therefore, to have been the first to ask for its resumption, yet, waiving all ceremony, I embraced the earliest favorable opportunity "to ascertain from the Mexican government whether they would receive an envoy from the United States intrusted with full power to adjust all the questions in dispute between the two governments." In September, 1845, I believed the propitious moment for such an overture had arrived. Texas, by the enthusiastic and almost unanimous will of her people,

had pronounced in favor of annexation. Mexico herself had agreed to acknowledge the independence of Texas subject to a condition, it is true, which she had no right to impose and no power to enforce. The last lingering hope of Mexico, if she still could have retained any, that Texas would ever again become one of her provinces, must have been abandoned.

The consul of the United States at the city of Mexico was, therefore, instructed by the Secretary of State, on the fifteenth of September, 1845, to make inquiry of the Mexican government. The enquiry was made, and on the fifteenth of October, 1845, the minister of Foreign Affairs of the Mexican government, in a note addressed to our consul, gave a favorable response requesting at the same time that our naval force might be withdrawn from Vera Cruz while negotiations should be pending. Upon the receipt of this note our naval force was promptly withdrawn from Vera Cruz. A minister was immediately appointed and departed to Mexico. Every thing bore a promising aspect for a speedy and peaceful adjustment of all our difficulties.

At the date of my annual message to Congress in December last, no doubt was entertained but that he would be received by the Mexican government, and the hope was cherished that all cause of misunderstanding between the two countries would be speedily removed. In the confident hope that such would be the result of his mission, I informed Congress that I forebore at that time to "recommence such ulterior measures of redress for the wrongs and injuries we had so long borne, as it would have been proper to make, had no such negotiation been instituted."—To my surprise and regret, the Mexican government, though solemnly pledged to do so, upon the arrival of our Minister in Mexico, refused to receive him, and a credit him. When he reached Vera Cruz on the thirtieth day of November 1845, he found that the aspect of affairs had undergone an unhappy change.—The government of General Herrera, who was at that time President of the Republic, was tottering to its fall. Gen. Paredes, a military leader had manifested his determination to overthrow the government of Gen. Herrera, by a military revolution; and one of the principal means which he employed to effect his purpose, and render the government of Herrera odious to the army and people of Mexico, was by loudly condemning its determination to receive a Minister of peace from the United States, alleging that it was the intention of Herrera, by a treaty with the United States, to dismember the territory of Mexico, by ceding away the department of Texas.—The government of Herrera is believed to have been well disposed to a pacific adjustment of existing difficulties; but probably alarmed for its own security, and in order to ward off the danger of the revolution led by Paredes, violated its solemn agreement, and refused to receive or accredit our Minister; and this, although informed that he had been invested with full power to adjust all questions in dispute between the two governments. Among the frivolous pretexts for this refusal the principal one was, that our minister had not gone upon a special mission, confined to the question of Texas alone, leaving all the outrages on our flag and our citizens unredressed. The Mexican government well knew that both our national honor and the protection due to our citizens, imperatively required that the two questions of boundary and indemnity should be treated of together, as naturally and inseparably blended, and they ought to have seen that this course was best calculated to enable the U. States to extend to them the most liberal justice. On the thirtieth of December, 1845, Gen. Herrera resigned the Presidency, and yielded up the government to Gen. Paredes without a struggle. Thus a revolution was accomplished solely by the army commanded by Paredes, and the supreme power in Mexico passed into the hands of a military usurper, who was known to be bitterly hostile to the United States.

Although the prospect of a pacific adjustment with the new government was unpromising, from the known hostility of its head to the U. States, yet, determined that nothing should be left undone on our part to restore friendly relations between the two countries, our minister was instructed to present his credentials to the new government, and ask to be accredited by it in the diplomatic character in which he had been commissioned. These instructions he executed by his note of first March, 1846, addressed to the Mexican minister of Foreign Affairs, but his request was insultingly refused by that minister in his answer of the twelfth of the same month. No alternative remained for our minister but to demand his passports and return to the U. States.

Thus was the extraordinary spectacle presented to the civilized world, of a government, in violation of its own express agreement, having twice rejected a minister of peace, invested with full powers to adjust all the existing differences between the two countries in a manner just and honorable to both. I am not aware that modern history presents a parallel case, in which, in time of peace, one nation has refused even to hear propositions from another for terminating existing difficulties between them.

Scarcely a hope of adjusting our difficulties, even at a remote day, or of preserving peace with Mexico, could be cherished while Paredes remained at the head of the government. He had acquired the supreme power by a military revolution and upon the most solemn pledges to wage war against the United States, and to reconquer Texas, which he claimed as a revolted province of Mexico.—He denounced as guilty of treason all those Mexicans who considered Texas as no longer constituting a part of the territory of Mexico, and who were friendly to the cause of peace. The duration of the war which he waged against the United States was indefinite because the end which he proposed, of the reconquest of Texas, was hopeless. Besides, there was good reason to believe, from all his conduct, that it was his intention to convert the republic of Mexico into a monarchy, and to call a foreign European prince to the throne. Preparatory to this end, he had, during his short rule, destroyed the liberty of the press, tolerating that portion of it only which openly advocated the establishment of a monarchy. The better to secure the success of the ultimate designs, he had, by an arbitrary decree, convoked a Congress—not to be elected by the

free voice of the people, but to be chosen in a manner to make them subservient to his will, and to give him absolute control over their deliberations.

Under all these circumstances, it was believed that any revolution in Mexico, founded upon opposition to the ambitious projects of Paredes, would tend to promote the cause of peace as well as to prevent any attempted European interference in the affairs of the North American continent—both objects of deep interest to the United States. Any such foreign interference, if attempted, must have been resisted by the United States. My views upon that subject were fully communicated to Congress in my last annual message. In any event, it was certain that no change whatever in the government of Mexico which would deprive Paredes of power could be for the worse, so far as the United States were concerned, while it was highly probable that any change must be for the better.

This was the state of affairs existing when Congress, on the thirteenth of May last, recognized the existence of the war which had been commenced by the government of Paredes; and it became an object of much importance, with a view to a speedy settlement of our difficulties and the restoration of an honorable peace, that Paredes should not retain power in Mexico.

Before that time there were symptoms of a revolution in Mexico, favored, as it was understood to be, by the more liberal party, and especially by those who were opposed to foreign interference and to the monarchical form of government. Santa Anna was then in exile in Havana, having been expelled from power and banished from his country by a revolution which occurred in December, 1844; but it was known that he had still a considerable party in his favor in Mexico. It was also equally well known that no vigilance which could be exerted by our squadron would in all probability, have prevented him from effecting a landing somewhere on the extensive gulf coast of Mexico, if he desired to return to his country. He had openly professed an entire change of policy; had expressed his regret that he had subverted the federal constitution of 1824, and avowed that he was now in favor of its restoration.

He had publicly declared his hostility in the strongest terms, to the establishment of a monarchy, and to European interference in the affairs of his country. Information to this effect had been received from sources believed to be reliable, at the date of the recognition of the existence of the war by Congress, and was afterwards fully confirmed by the receipt of the despatch of our consul in the city of Mexico, with the accompanying documents, which are herewith transmitted. Besides, it was reasonable to suppose that he must see the ruinous consequences to Mexico of a war with the United States, and that it would be his interest to favor peace.

It was under these circumstances and upon these considerations that it was deemed expedient not to obstruct his return to Mexico, should he attempt to do so. Our object was the restoration of peace; and with that view, no reason was perceived why we should take part with Paredes, and aid him, by means of our blockade, in preventing the return of his rival to Mexico. On the contrary, it was believed that the intestine divisions which ordinary sagacity could not but anticipate as the fruit of Santa Anna's return to Mexico, and his contest with Paredes might strongly tend to produce a disposition with both parties to restore and preserve peace with the U. States.

Paredes was a soldier by profession, and a monarchist in principle. He had but recently before been successful in a military revolution, by which he had obtained power. He was the sworn enemy of the U. States, with which he had involuntarily his country in the existing war. Santa Anna had been expelled from power by the army—was known to be in open hostility to Paredes, and publicly pledged himself against foreign interventions and the restoration of Monarchy in Mexico. In view of these facts and circumstances it was, that, when orders were issued to the commander of our naval forces in the Gulf on the 15th day of May last, only two days after the existence of the war had been recognized by Congress, to place the coasts of Mexico under blockade, he was directed not to obstruct the passage of Santa Anna to Mexico, should he attempt to return.

A revolution took place in Mexico in the early part of August following, by which the power of Paredes was overthrown, and he has since been banished from the country, and is now in exile. Shortly afterwards, Santa Anna returned. It remains to be seen whether his return may not yet prove to be favorable to a pacific adjustment of the existing difficulties, it being manifestly his interest not to persevere in the prosecution of a war commenced by Paredes, to accomplish a purpose so absurd as the reconquest of Texas to the Sabine. Had Paredes remained in power, it is mortally certain that any pacific adjustment would have been hopeless.

Upon the commencement of hostilities by Mexico against the United States, the indignant spirit of the nation was aroused. Congress promptly responded to the expectations of the country, and by the act of the thirteenth of May last recognized the fact that war existed, by the act of Mexico between the United States and that republic, and granted the means necessary for its vigorous prosecution. Being involved in a war thus commenced by Mexico, and for the justice of which on our part, we may confidently appeal to the whole world, I resolved to prosecute it with the utmost vigor. Accordingly the ports of Mexico on the Gulf and on the Pacific have been placed under blockade, and the territory invaded at several important points. Thereports from the departments of war and the navy will inform you more in detail of the measures adopted in the emergency in which our country was placed, and of the gratifying results which have been accomplished.

The various columns of the army have performed their duty under great disadvantages, with the most distinguished skill and courage.—The victories of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, and of Monterrey, won against greatly superior numbers, and against most decided advantages in their respects on the part of the ene-